

**CONGRATULATIONS...  
YOU HAVE JUST KILLED  
BEETHOVEN!**

...a medical school professor...told about the following case study and asked students what they would do:  
The father had syphilis and the mother had tuberculosis. Of four previous children, the first was blind, the second died, the third was both deaf and dumb, and the fourth had tuberculosis. What would you advise the woman to do when she finds that she is pregnant again? One student answered, 'I would advise an abortion.'  
Then the professor said, 'Congratulations...You have just killed Beethoven.'

1967-2011  
Seven million

# PRESBYTERIAN NETWORK

Autumn 2011



Issue 22/2



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## Contents

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| From the Editor .....  | 1                 |
| Good Works and the Christian, <i>Rev. Ian Hamilton</i> .....                 | 2                 |
| 'Lord, open Thou the King of England's Eyes', <i>Rev. Brian Norton</i> ..... | 6                 |
| ICRC 2013, Cardiff .....   | 10                |
| The Conversion of Manasseh, <i>Rev. Dr Kevin Bidwell</i> .....               | 11                |
| Our God, <i>Rev. Dr Chad van Dixhoorn</i> .....                              | 14                |
| Ordination of Kevin Bidwell, <i>Jonathan Winch</i> .....                     | 17                |
| A book on prayer, <i>Mrs Tegwen Holst</i> .....                              | 18                |
| Spotlight on the Churches .....  | 19                |
| Abortion, <i>Dr Chris Richards</i> .....                                     | 26                |
| Calvin's First Hymn Book, <i>Rev. Dr Peter Naylor</i> .....                  | 36                |
| Church Directory .....   | Inside Back Cover |

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**Cover Picture:** 'Bethany with Jacob'. We have used this picture because it portrays the joy that accompanies the birth of a new baby, which is relevant to the article on Abortion in this issue. Photo from Rev. Dr Bill Schweitzer.

**Back cover:** Quotation from Wayne Grudem, *Politics according to the Bible* (Zonervan, 2010), p.163, citing Randy Alcorn, *ProLife Answers to ProChoice Arguments*.

## From the editor...

This issue of the *Presbyterian Network* has an article on abortion. It deserves very close attention. Please do read it.

David and Barbara Cross are returning to Pennsylvania this month. We are greatly indebted to them. They came to work in the EPCEW when it was much smaller and devoted many years to the cause of Christ among us. They were such encouragers, so energetic and enthusiastic—they made a huge difference to us and we are going to miss them very much. We thank God for them and pray that the next phase of their life, at home in the States, will be blessed by our gracious God.



David & Barbara

At the start of September, many elders of the churches, with several candidates for the ministry and friends from churches abroad, met for the annual conference (at Leicester). Once again, we were thankful to the Lord for enabling us to edify and encourage one another and to develop bonds of fellowship and Christian love.

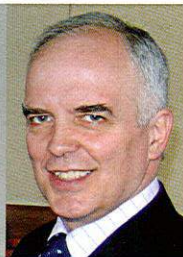
♦ Editor, 15 September 2011





# Good Works and the Christian

Rev. Ian Hamilton



Every Christian has been 'created in Christ Jesus for good works' (Eph. 2: 10). So much are good works native and necessary to authentic Christian faith that the apostle James tells us that 'faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead' (Jas. 2: 17). In saying this, James is simply echoing the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. When the Lord warned his disciples to 'beware of false prophets', he told them that they could be recognized by the fruit produced in their lives: 'every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit... Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits' (Matt. 7: 15-20). No well-taught, wise Christian will dispute this.

The question that naturally arises at this point, however, is a pressing one: God has created me in Christ Jesus for good works, but my good works are inconsistent, lacking, and shot through with pride, mere dutifulness, and often half-heartedness. How then can I ever be acceptable to God, who is 'of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong'

(Hab. 1: 13)? Even when I have done all that I can do, all that God has commanded me to do, the Lord himself confirms that I am yet an unprofitable and unworthy servant (Luke 17: 10).

There are some men today, within Reformed churches, for whom this is no dilemma at all. They teach that, notwithstanding our sinfully defective good works, God accepts what we give to him and justifies us through faith in Christ and the good works that are intrinsic to true faith. At first sight there is a certain plausibility about this new teaching (though it echoes in its major points the teaching of the Council of Trent 1545-63). Throughout the Scriptures both the graces and good works of believers are declared to be acceptable to God. Peter tells us that 'the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit' is 'very precious in God's sight' (1 Peter 3: 4); the writer to the Hebrews tells us that the continual offering up of 'a sacrifice of praise', doing good and sharing what we have, are pleasing to God (Heb. 13: 15-16); Paul confirms that the sacrificial gifts of God's people are a 'sacrifice acceptable and pleas-

ing to God' (Phil. 4:18); finally, our Lord Jesus Christ says that 'Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward... And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward' (Matt. 10: 41-42). It is not difficult, therefore, to see that 'good works' belong to the heart of the Christian Faith, are acceptable to God because they are in accordance with his revealed will, and are the fruit of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

But how do these 'good works' relate to the believer's justification? Do they, in any measure, contribute towards his justification? The Scriptures answer this question unequivocally: good works are the *effect* of faith and the visible evidence of our justification; they have no part to play in the faith that is the instrumental means of our justification. As such, 'good works' do not and cannot form any part of the ground or basis of our justification. 'Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ' (Rom. 5: 1; cf. 4: 5). Yet, the good works of believers are truly acceptable to God—but only through the merit of Christ. James Buchanan makes the point well:

Considered as fruits of our sanctification...[good works] cannot be too highly commended; but considered as the ground of our Justification, or as forming any

part of our TITLE to that inheritance, they are to be utterly rejected, and treated as 'dung' and 'filthy rags' with reference to that end; for they cannot be regarded as such, without dishonour to the redeeming work of Christ; and for this reason the Apostle, speaking of himself as having been, 'as touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless', declares that he had renounced all dependence upon it, and upon everything else but Christ alone (*Justification*, p. 364, quoting Phil. 3:9).

How then are we to assess the recent teaching that maintains that we are justified by 'obedient faith' (in the sense that acts of obedience are inherent in our faith), and not 'faith alone' in Jesus Christ? This revisionist teaching (it is a contradiction of the Reformation consensus on justification) is seriously flawed in at least two ways.

First, it over-estimates the character of the good works a believer can perform and under-estimates what is pleasing and acceptable to our superlatively holy God. Put more bluntly: How much obedience must I give, along with my faith in Christ, for God to justify me? Must it be wholly consistent, or will intermittent obedience be sufficient? And what about the quality of my believing obedience? What measure of qualitative obedience will God consider acceptable? These are not arcane questions.

Second, this 'Reformed revisionism'



is even more seriously flawed: it profoundly fails to understand the significance of our Lord Jesus Christ's earthly obedience. If my ultimate acceptance with God rests upon Christ's atoning work on the cross and on my good works, what becomes of the saving significance of Christ's humanity from Bethlehem to Calvary? Is the significance of his life from the Virgin's womb to being nailed to the cross merely a prelude to the main event, as it were? Are we only to understand Jesus' obedience as what was necessary for him to be the sinless offering that would take away the sin of the world? In this connection, it is vastly significant that Paul can describe the whole course of Jesus' life, death and resurrection as 'one act of righteousness [that] leads to justification and life for all men' (Rom. 5: 18). For Paul, the 'active obedience' of Christ and the 'passive obedience' of Christ, are one obedience. As he puts it in Philippians 2: 8, Christ Jesus was 'obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross'. The saving obedience of our Redeemer encompassed every phase of his earthly, mediatorial life. In Romans 5: 18ff., Paul understands the whole course of our Saviour's life in terms of representative headship – what the one does has saving implications for all men. Our standing before God rests alone on Christ's 'one act of righteousness', which God imputes to our account by faith alone (Rom. 5: 18-19).

John Bunyan tells us of his discovery of this glorious truth:

I was all this while ignorant of Jesus Christ; and going about to establish my own righteousness; and had perished therein, had not God in mercy showed me more of my state by nature... But one day, as I was passing into the field... suddenly this sentence fell upon my soul, *Thy righteousness is in heaven*; and methought, withal, I saw with the eyes of my soul, Jesus Christ at God's right hand: there, I say, was my righteousness; so that wherever I was, or whatever I was doing, God could not say of me, *He wants* [i.e. lacks] *My righteousness*; for that was just before him. I also saw moreover, that it was not my good frame of heart that made my righteousness better, nor yet my bad frame that made my righteousness worse; for my righteousness was Jesus Christ himself ... Now did my chains fall off my legs indeed; I was loosed from my afflictions and irons ... now, went I also home rejoicing, for the grace and love of God.<sup>1</sup>

The deeply flawed teaching which maintains that 'the personal godliness of the believer is also necessary for his justification in the judgment of the last day' and that 'abiding in Christ by keeping his commandments... are all necessary for continuing in the state of justification' (as a leading exponent of this new teach-

ing has written) needs to be seen for what it is, a regression into moralism and Romanism.

It is remarkable how this new teaching seeks to trace its heritage back to the Reformers. Calvin for one, however, is absolutely clear what the ground of our justification is and what significance the good works of believers have. In a lecture on Ezekiel 18: 17, Calvin explains how the doctrine, 'faith without works justifies', is either true or false, depending on the sense it bears. He explains,

But although works tend in no way to be the cause of justification, yet, when the elect sons of God were justified freely by faith, at the same time their works are esteemed righteous by the same gratuitous liberality. Thus it remains true that faith without works justifies, although this needs prudence and a sound interpretation. For this proposition, 'faith without works justifies', is true and yet false, according to different senses. 'Faith without works justifies when by itself' is false, because faith without works is void (*nulla est*). But if the clause 'without works' is joined with the word 'to justify', the proposition will be true: therefore faith cannot justify when it is without works, because it is dead, and a mere fiction (*merum figmentum*). He who is born of God is just, as John says

(1 John 5: 18). Thus faith can be no more separated from works than the sun from its heat, yet faith justifies without works, because works do not form a reason (*rationem*) for our justification; but faith alone (*sola fides*) reconciles us to God and causes him to love us, not in ourselves, but in his only begotten Son.<sup>2</sup>

This has ever been the Reformed understanding of the relationship between the believer's faith and good works. Any other construction confuses justification and sanctification, makes the believer a contributor to his justification, and denies the saving significance of Christ's active obedience.

Shortly before he died, Gresham Machen sent his colleague and dear friend, John Murray, a telegram with these words, 'I'm so thankful for the active obedience of Christ. No hope without it.' This alone is how anyone can stand before God on the great day of Jesus Christ, cleansed by his blood and clothed with his imputed righteousness.



1. John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding To The Chief Of Sinners* (London, 1905 ed.), 32, 129-130.

2. I was directed to this quotation from Calvin by Dr Mark Garcia. It is found in his doctoral thesis: *Life in Christ: The Function of Union with Christ in the 'Unio-Duplex Gratia' Structure of Calvin's Soteriology with Special Reference to the Relationship of Justification and Sanctification in Sixteenth-Century Context* (PhD thesis, Edinburgh, 2004).



# 'Lord, Open Thou the King of England's eyes'

Rev. Brian Norton



The Authorised Version of the Bible was published 400 years ago. In this third article, Rev. Brian Norton looks at William Tyndale whose life was dedicated to putting the Bible into the hands of the British people in English.

**L**ord, open Thou the King of England's eyes.' So prayed William Tyndale as he was martyred in 1536.

Today in the embankment garden below King's College London stands a bronze statue of him with an open Bible in his hand.

## *An open Bible*

The Mediaeval Church had kept the Bible closed. Happy to provide their version of its stories, they built a dam to contain its waters and keep the truth from the people so that their engineered edifice of clerical privilege could be safe and secure. In the 14th century John Wycliffe had provided a millstream, to tap the powerful water of God's Word. Tyndale opened the sluice gates of the dam, and no amount of engineering could stop the torrent. The edifice of superstition, power and privilege began to collapse. Both men opened the closed Bible.

## *A hunted man!*

Tyndale's story is one of intrigue and adventure. Brian Edwards' title, *God's Smuggler*, is fitting; or that of *Channel 4's* DVD, *God's Outlaw*. It reads like a classic 'Boys' Own' story.

He had a northern name, but was born in Gloucestershire in 1494, and educated at Oxford. Well born, he was nevertheless determined to provide for the ploughboy.

He fled England, then escaped from Cologne with but a fragment of his first printing to Worms, escaped later from Antwerp and was shipwrecked, losing more of his work. His English Bible translation and other books were smuggled from the continent in bales of cloth. He was in touch with martyrs in England, and in the end was betrayed by the deceit of an Englishman in Belgium. He suffered imprisonment and was eventually strangled at the stake before the burning of his body, at the age of 42.

## *An ally at court*

The Tudor rulers of 16th century England and Wales were mostly wily, if not ruthless, politicians. Learning and religion flourished, but both could be dangerous pursuits. Luther was the talk of the age, and Henry VIII decided that this English 'Lutheran' on the Continent needed dealing with. Copies of Tyndale's New Testament started coming into the country in 1526 and Henry's bishops were on the watch to enforce regulations first enacted against Wycliffe and the Lollards. Possession of an English Bible was a death warrant. Yet all Bishop Tunstall and others could do was burn Tyndale's New Testaments.

But Tyndale acquired a surprising advocate at court, Ann Boleyn. Like Ann of Bohemia before her (who married Richard II in 1383, owned a Wycliffe Bible and played a part in transmitting his ideas back to Bohemia to John Hus and his followers), Ann Boleyn had a copy of Tyndale's *Obedience of the Christian Man*, and his 1534 New Testament. She persuaded Henry VIII to look at it and view it more favourably.

## *Prison—but the work carries on*

However, the Church and Spanish authorities in Antwerp were soon to catch up with Tyndale, and in 1535 he was betrayed and imprisoned. Even so, in the same year, a revision of Tyndale's work by his friend Miles

Coverdale was published. Coverdale used Tyndale's Pentateuch and New Testament, while translating most of the Old Testament from the Latin of the Vulgate. Another of his helpers, John Rogers, brought out a revision in 1537, using Tyndale's work from Joshua to Chronicles, under the pseudonym 'Thomas Matthew', but putting the monogram WT before the NT. This received official approval and became the basis of Henry's 'authorised version' of the Great Bible, carried out by Coverdale in 1539. The dam was blown open. The word poured forth along the channel that Tyndale had made.

In 1560, the Genevan refugees completed the translation from the Hebrew and further revised Tyndale's text. Elizabeth I's 'Bishops Bible' uses the same channel, as did the '1611' translators in James I's reign. Tyndale's work lay behind them all. Tyndale's influence pervades, despite the fact that the AV was intended as a revision of the Bishops Bible, and despite James' aversion to the Genevan notes. That predominance of Tyndale, though not acknowledged, gave unity to the AV even though it was a product of committees.

## *Why such influence?*

Why was it such a formative influence?

First, Tyndale's scholarship was outstanding. He was highly skilled in Greek translation, even as early as



1523, when leaving Gloucestershire to seek support from Tunstall, Bishop of London. He acquired Hebrew on the Continent from 1524 to 1530, where new Hebraic studies were developing. He was helped in his understanding of Scripture by Luther's works, including his German Bible of 1522. He borrowed from Luther for his introductions to many of his writings. However, his introductions to Hebrews and to the Pentateuch show originality.

Second, his perception was that Greek and Hebrew can be better 'Englished' than 'Latinised'. He avoided the temptation to produce a Latinized form of English, despite his own classical scholarship. He wrote in 1528 in *The Obedience of the Christian Man*:

For the Greek tongue agreeth more with the English than with the Latin. And the properties of the Hebrew tongue agreeth a thousand times more with the English than with Latin. The manner of speaking is both one, so that in a thousand places thou needest not but to translate it word for word, when thou must seek a compass in the Latin... A thousand parts better may it be translated into the English than into Latin.

Third, he was a lively writer of English: a wordsmith. He used the direct English speech of ordinary life, not the complex Latinized forms of scholars, drawing on his native Gloucestershire. And where there

were no adequate words he created them: 'scapegoat', 'atonement'. He maintained Greek and Hebrew rhythms.

Fourth, he used new Continental scholarship. Erasmus's Greek text was crucial. Various European translations contributed to understanding and mode of expression. Were there any English translations? Anglo-Saxon glosses on the Latin text exist, as well as later Middle English ones. But the most important potential source is the immensely significant Middle English Bible of Wycliffe. Revisionism has tried to play down both the popular impact of the Reformation in England and the influence of Wycliffe and Lollardy. But Ann Hudson has shown that the influence of Wycliffe and Lollardy was considerable and widespread.

### *Wycliffe's influence?*

The possibility that Tyndale relied on Wycliffe's 14th century translation has traditionally been dismissed. More recently, Henry Wansbrough, for example, has asserted Tyndale's knowledge of Wycliffe, some claiming that he must have had a Wycliffe manuscript open in front of him. Comparing them it's possible to see close resemblance in some places though not in others. When Tyndale, in his *Epistle to the Reader* in his 1526 New Testament, asks for leniency when judging his translation, he gives these grounds, 'I had no man to counterfeit, neither was helped with

English of any that had interpreted the same or such like things in the Scripture before time.'

He repeated this claim in his 1534 New Testament, saying that it is easier for those to criticize 'than so well to have translated it themselves of their own pregnant wits, at the beginning without fore examples'.

Does taking his words at face value end the matter of any influence from Wycliffe? Not necessarily. Living as he did in Gloucestershire and near Bristol, Tyndale was in an area considerably influenced by Lollardy. The very language of evangelical piety would be much influenced by Wycliffe, and his translation often quoted. Lollard tracts were circulating. The power of oral transmission is greater than many suppose. David Daniell (2003 & 2008) refers to Wycliffe creating a 'common pool of English Bible phrases and passages in people's memories'. (Just think how many AV passages are used by those who hardly ever read it).

In some cases Wycliffe and Tyndale may be drawing on a common source. A familiar phrase in the AV is 'the salt of the earth'. This is present with slight variation in Tyndale and Wycliffe. However, it is also present in Chaucer and even in an Anglo-Saxon gloss on the Latin text of Matthew. So it would appear to have been in English usage for a long time. More importantly, however much Tyndale drew on Luther and others including, by whatever route, Wy-

cliffe or the Vulgate, he transformed them, and his genius with language gave them impact. Tyndale's 'Ye are the salt of the earth' is perhaps more effective rhythmically than Wycliffe's 'Ye ben salt of the erthe.'

### *His works*

Tyndale is best known as a translator: the New Testament in 1526; the Pentateuch in 1530; NT revised 1534; Joshua to Chronicles posthumously in Matthew's Bible in 1537. And he is the fountainhead of so much that followed. But he was also a Bible commentator and an enthusiastic defender of gospel truth. He wrote prefaces to most of the books and *A Pathway into the Holy Scriptures* (1525). He commented on John's first epistle, 1531, and on Matthew 5-7, 1532, (briefer notes on chapters 1-21 had appeared in 1525 in the Cologne fragment).

His major polemical works mark him as a reformer: *The Parable of the Wicked Man*, 1527; *The Obedience of the Christian Man*, 1527-28; *The Practice of Prelates*, 1530; and his *Answer unto Sir Thomas More's 'Dialogue'*, 1531. Iain Murray has written of the impact of these writings under the title 'The light that scattered Roman darkness' (the full quotation is 'To scatter Roman darkness by this light, the loss of land and life I'll reckon slight'). He brought Biblical light to bear on the state of the church and of society. While confirming the place of social order in society he attacked



hierarchical structure in the church as a manifestation of antichrist. His treatment of ecclesiastical ceremonies established that only what was commanded in Scripture was fitting, and all else obscured the gospel; such corruptions needed to be removed to allow the purity of the gospel to shine forth. In *The Practice of Prelates* he identified the early church pattern as two offices: elder or overseer, and deacon. In every congregation ministers of the Word should serve with fellow elders holding the same office.

### *His prayer answered*

How was Tyndale's prayer of 1536 as he was led to execution answered? Henry became persuaded of the benefits of a break with Rome and the importance of the Bible in English. By 1540, what was largely Tyndale's work was placed by Henry's appointment in every parish church. By 1547 the new King Edward was fully committed to the Bible and its

role in reforming the church. The Bible in English was open. Through Tyndale's genius it enriched the English language. Its truth shaped English-speaking culture. Its gospel set men free.

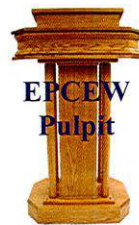
**Tyndale's works include:** *Expositions etc.* (inc *Practice of Prelates*) (Parker Society, Cambridge, 1849); *Doctrinal Treatises* (Parker, 1848); *An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue* (Parker, 1850); *The Obedience of the Christian Man* (Penguin Classics, 2000); *Old Testament*, ed. D. Daniell, (Yale, 1992); *New Testament 1534*, ed. D. Daniell (Yale, 1992); *New Testament 1526 facsimile, int.*, D. Daniell (British Library, 2008).

**Other books:** David Daniell, *William Tyndale, A Biography* (Yale, 1994); Iain Murray, *Banner of Truth Magazine*, Issue 560 (May, 2010); David Norton, *The King James Bible* (Cambridge, 2011; *Tyndale, God's Outlaw* DVD by Greenville Film Productions, 1986.

## ICRC 2013, Cardiff



Over the next two years, members of Immanuel, Bethel and Cheltenham, as well as others in the EPCEW, will be working together to prepare to host the International Conference of Reformed Churches d.v. 28 August to 4 September, 2013. From the earliest times, Christian ministers have travelled in Christ's service, so facing the need for hospitality, thereby creating an opportunity for brothers to serve the Lord. John 'the Elder' writes: *Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers, who have borne witness of your love before the church. If you send them on their way in a manner worthy of God, you will do well, because they went forth for his name's sake....We therefore ought to receive such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth* (3 John 5-8). The ICRC website: [www.icrconline.com](http://www.icrconline.com).



# The Conversion of Manasseh

Rev. Dr Kevin Bidwell



We find unsearchable riches and priceless lessons in Scripture, as we look to 'Jesus Christ and him crucified'. As Paul reminds us, boasting about ourselves has no place in the Christian life. 'Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord' (1 Cor. 1:31).

King Manasseh is an example of an earthly king who had no reason to boast. Rather, his wicked past would have filled him with shame, horror and humiliation. In such darkness, God sometimes demonstrates his amazing grace and converts wicked men.

This sermon's title is the conversion of King Manasseh (2 Chr. 33: 1-20). First we will examine briefly the example of his father, King Hezekiah; second, Manasseh's great wickedness; and third, Manasseh's repentance.

### *1. Manasseh's father, Hezekiah*

It is recorded that Hezekiah 'did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done' (2 Chr. 29: 1-2). Notice the phrase 'in the eyes of the Lord'. The Lord saw everything that Hezekiah did as he does every creature. Everything we do and say is before the 'eyes of the Lord' and this

should give us all pause for thought.

Hezekiah succeeded his wicked father, Ahaz, and immediately, in the first year of his reign, he set out to open the doors of the house of the Lord (29: 3) and to restore the Levitical ministry. Ahaz had stopped the ordinances of temple worship, its burnt offerings and so on (29: 2-11). We observe that the increase of sin led to the removal of the true worship of the true God. False worship practices are always a symptom of spiritual decay. Hezekiah was a reformer, who restored temple worship, celebration of the Passover (30: 1-27). He sought God 'with all of his heart, and prospered' (31: 21). Sadly, towards the end of his reign pride entered his heart because of his many achievements and the Bible simply states that 'his heart was proud' (32: 25). Here we can possibly see a reason why his son, Manasseh, destroyed the great reforming work of his father. This gives a sobering warning against pride and against the terrible thought of not finishing well. This is something about which to petition the Lord; to ask to be kept from pride, and that we would finish our Christian race, to God's honour and glory.



The prophet Isaiah preached at the time of Hezekiah; chapters 36-39 of his prophecy record the events of the end of Hezekiah's life. In summary, Hezekiah was at the point of death and Isaiah said to him; 'set your house in order, for you shall die, you shall not recover' (Isa. 38: 1). Hezekiah cried out to the Lord and Isaiah came back and pronounced that the Lord had heard his cry and added fifteen years to his life. God gave him a sign to assure him of the promise and the 'sun turned back on the dial the ten steps' (38: 8). When Hezekiah recovered, he received envoys from Babylon and foolishly showed them all the treasures of his house. This was military and political suicide. Isaiah then prophesied a future judgment, one in which Judah would be carried off to Babylon, but this was not to happen in Hezekiah's lifetime.

How does King Hezekiah respond? Disastrously! "'The word of the LORD that you have spoken is good". For he thought, "There will be peace and security in my days (39: 8)".' This demonstrates his short-sightedness, for it appears that he had no covenantal vision for future generations.

This response should cause us to search our own hearts. Does this kind of attitude pervade our minds, an attitude that cares little for posterity? 'As long as it does not affect me in my lifetime, that's alright,' some think to themselves. We must build Christians and congregations with a different perspective and a different

vision to that which Hezekiah displayed at the end of his life. We want to guard against undue speculation but we are forced to consider that perhaps this attitude is what infected the worldview of his son, one who became a wicked, selfish, and godless king.

## 2. Manasseh's great wickedness

Manasseh had been given a noble name—after one of Joseph's sons. It is possible to be given a noble and biblical name by your parents, but this is not enough to please Almighty God. Matthew Henry, commenting on 2 Chronicles 33, says that this 'foolish young prince, in contradiction to the good example and good education his father gave him, abandoned himself to all impiety, transcribed the abominations of the heathen (v.2), ruined the established religion, unravelled his fathers glorious reformation (v.3), profaned the house of God with his idolatry (vv.4-5) and he even dedicated his children to the false heathen gods (v.6).'

Manasseh lusted intensely after occult practices, something that God forbids totally. He used 'fortune-telling and omens and sorcery and dealt with mediums and with wizards' (33: 6). Most people today in the UK think that they can 'play with fire' as they go to fortune tellers at seaside resorts and attend seances when their relatives pass away. Never mind the harmful consequences of getting involved in these

things, God's fury burns at such a turning from Him. God declares that: 'If a person turns to mediums and wizards, whoring after them, I will set my face against that person' (Lev. 20: 6). How many people today face the fury of God in our nation, for turning aside to the occult?

Manasseh deserved nothing from God except fiery judgment, but God showed him mercy. This is what the Lord said to Moses: 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion' (Exod. 33: 19).

## 3. Manasseh's repentance

As the narrative unfolds, we read that 'the Lord spoke to Manasseh and his people, but...they paid no attention' (2 Chr. 33: 10). In hardness of heart he refused to listen, and this led the Lord to intervene providentially in order to arrest his attention. What was that providence of God? It was an invasion by the Assyrians and they captured Manasseh with hooks, bound him with chains and they brought him to Babylon so that 'he was in distress' (33: 12). Often, when God is drawing his elect, he brings them to a state of utter despair and brokenness and many converted Christians can look back on their own conversion and see that the Lord humbled them in some way, before

he brought them to himself.

The dethroned and distressed Manasseh 'entreated the favour of the Lord his God'; he 'humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers' and prayed (33: 12-13). Why did Manasseh respond in this way in his adversity? It was the gracious work of the Holy Spirit leading him to repentance. John 6: 44 teaches us that no one can come to Christ unless the Father draws him. Dethroned Manasseh responded to the Lord positively, but how would we expect God to react to such a man, one accustomed to such wickedness?

We marvel that God accepted his repentance. 'God was moved by his entreaty and heard his plea' (33: 13). God is merciful, compassionate, and full of love, in a way that is beyond our comprehension. Manasseh prayed like the man of whom the Lord Jesus spoke about in the parable: 'God, be merciful to me a sinner' (Luke 18: 13). True repentance always produces the fruits of repentance and accordingly Manasseh took away the foreign gods, he removed all the idolatrous altars he had built, restored the altar of the Lord, and commanded Judah to serve the Lord (33: 15-16).

When we read the first chapter of Matthew's Gospel we are left in awe at God's compassion because King Manasseh is found in the genealogy

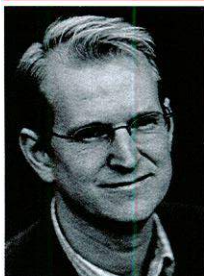
Hezekiah...had  
no covenantal  
vision for future  
generations



of the Lord Jesus Christ. What amazing grace this man experienced!

Let us consider: if it were not for the mercy of God, where would any of us be today? May we be encouraged to pray for family members who may be living in deep sin, be-

cause Manasseh is a trophy of grace, an example to show us that the worst of sinners is never beyond the power of the gospel.



## Our God

according to the

Westminster Confession of Faith

Rev. Dr Chad Van Dixhoorn

2. God has all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of Himself; and is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which He has made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting His own glory in, by, unto, and upon them. He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things; and has most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever Himself pleases. In His sight all things are open and manifest, His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to Him contingent, or uncertain. He is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works, and in all His commands. To Him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience He is pleased to require of them.

### God in himself

Chapter 2 section 1 of our Confession, considered last time, encourages us to behold our God. At that time we wondered at 'the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God.' We could echo the exclamations of the Apostle Paul at the end of Romans 11, praising God for his 'unsearchable judgments' and confessing that his 'ways are past finding out.'

Section 2 continues in doxology as it speaks of God's *aseity*—his absolute independence from all things. As

Jesus tells us, God has life 'in himself' (John 5: 26). As Paul says, no one has known God's mind or been his counselor. Therefore, no one can add anything to who God is. For 'who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?' (Rom. 11: 35; see 11: 33-36).

As you can see, every effort is taken in this section of the Confession to show us that God does not need us, or owe us anything. After all, 'God has all life' in and of himself. All glory and goodness and blessedness resides in God alone, as martyrs, poets and apostles testify (Acts 7: 2;

Ps. 119: 68; 1 Tim. 6: 15; Rom. 9: 5). Of course he does not need anything other than himself. When he was alone, before the creation of the universe, he was 'all-sufficient'. He stood in no 'need of any creatures which he had made'. He did not need them to sustain his life, to increase his glory, to show his goodness, or to add to his blessedness.

God does not need us for anything. In fact the exact opposite is true. Take God's glory as an example. As Paul explained to the people of Athens, God does not command our worship because he needs something from us (Acts 17: 24-25). Surely one of Job's friends was having a moment of clarity when he argued that God does not benefit from us (Job 22: 2-3), or from any of the wonderful creatures he has made—not from the blazing stars glittering in the night, not from whales frolicking in the seas, not from flowering lilies arrayed in all their splendour, not from men and women at the height of their wisdom, strength and beauty. God's glory comes from himself. And God is infinite in all of his perfections, including his glory. To speak of God increasing in glory is in a very real sense to speak nonsense.

The reality is that God actually 'manifests' or shows his glory by us as he puts us on display for himself to enjoy. In the same way, God reveals his glory in us, leaving us to wonder at the one who made us. And in his supreme goodness, God even

gives glory to us, permitting us the honour of honours, the privilege of reflecting God's image, undeserving though we are and always have been.

### God and us

But if we follow the Westminster divines in this paragraph, or indeed, if we follow the Apostle Paul in Romans 11, we will see that we are not only to reflect on God's absolute independence and incomparable greatness, we are also to see what that means for God's creatures in our utter dependence.

That is what the Confession means when it states that God 'is the alone fountain of all being'. God is not only the supreme being. He is also the one through whom all others have their being. All things are 'of' God, all things are 'through' God. He made all things and he upholds all things by his mighty power. And so all things are to be oriented 'to' God (Rom. 11: 36).

The fact that God is the fountain of all things and that all things are to be oriented to him has consequences for the world. The greatest of these consequences is that God 'hath most sovereign dominion over' us. No matter who or what we are talking about, it is always true that God can 'do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever Himself pleaseth'. He is 'the only 'Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords' (1 Tim. 6: 15).

This was something Nebuchadnezzar had to learn the hard way. Only



after he was driven from society like an animal did he finally come to see that there was one who was 'Most High', and that no one 'can stay his hand or say to him, "what have you done?"' (Dan. 4: 25, 35). This was something which Abraham learned the easy way as God chose him, undeserving as he was, to be the father of the faithful (Rom. 4: 11).

Section 2 ends by referring to God's pleasure. God is able to do what will please him because he sees all and knows all. 'In God's sight all things are open and manifest'—they are clearly open to his view. As the writer to the Hebrews says so plainly, 'Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account' (Heb. 4: 13).

God's knowledge is infinite and because of this it is 'infallible'. The infinite knowledge of God can account for all possible variables and eventualities. His knowledge is 'independent' of his creatures and all that might happen to them or all that they might do. There are depths of riches to God's wisdom and knowledge that we will never reach. His judgments really are unsearchable and his paths are beyond our tracing (Rom. 11: 33-34). This must be the case if God's 'understanding is infinite', as the Psalmist says it is (Ps. 147: 5).

If God's understanding is infinite it is not idle philosophical speculation

to say that 'nothing is to Him contingent, or uncertain'. Indeed, as the Holy Spirit told Ezekiel, and Ezekiel told Israel's leaders, God knows even what goes through our minds (Ezek. 11: 5). If we properly understand the God who has revealed himself to us in the Scriptures, then we will also understand that God knows the end from the beginning (Acts 15: 17-18) for he planned it all to his pleasure.

God knows what things will please him because he knows all things; he also knows what will please him because he knows himself. He is holy, and thus his ways will be holy. How good it is for God's people to say with all their hearts and with all the Scriptures that 'He is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works, and in all His commands' (Ps. 145: 17 ; Rom. 7: 12).

With such a God, how could we not recognize that 'To Him is due from angels and men'—in fact from all his creatures—the 'worship, service, or obedience He is pleased to require of them'. Is that not exactly what we observe in John's vision of heaven (Rev. 5: 12-14)?

Let us prepare ourselves to worship him in heaven ourselves, serving him now with our hearts and minds and voices and gifts. And by God's grace, let us go from this reflection about God, endeavouring to give him that obedience that he has been pleased to require of us.



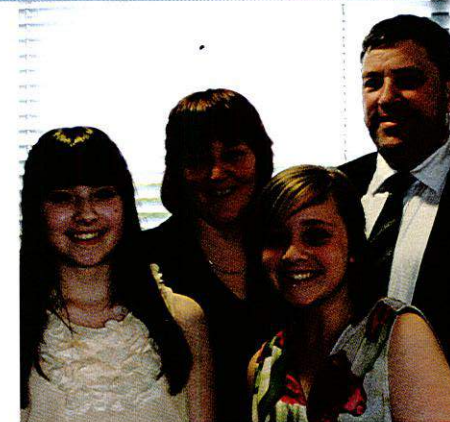
## Ordination of Dr Kevin Bidwell

Jonathan Winch

From little acorns mighty oak trees grow, and those of us who have witnessed the planting of Sheffield Evangelical Presbyterian Church have watched with excitement as the first green shoots have begun to push above the ground. God's Holy Spirit has blessed the faithful ministering of his Word since Bible Studies began in February last year, and in September 2010 the first Lord's Day worship service was held. In April the initial membership was enrolled and the Lord's Supper held for the first time.

Saturday 2 July 2011, the day set aside for the ordination of Kevin Bidwell as minister of the new church, was therefore eagerly anticipated. Well over 100 joined the congregation to unite their hearts and voices in praise and thanks to God for his goodness, and in prayer for Kevin and his family, for the congregation, and for Sheffield, England's fifth largest city with half a million precious souls.

In its early months, Sheffield Presbyterian Church has been under the care of the Gateshead and Durham sessions, and Brian Norton therefore led the service of ordination, charging the new church to pray for their minister 'as fellow labourers' (2 Thess. 3: 1), and charging Kevin to



pray for the people, to come to know them, and to care for them 'as a father' (1 Thess. 2: 11).

Todd Matocha as Moderator conducted the ordination vows, reminding Kevin again that with the great privilege of being a minister of the gospel comes the great responsibility to feed and care for the flock. Nineteen presbyters then laid hands on Kevin, and the congregation sang with power and feeling the words of Psalm 116: 'How can I thank the Lord for all he's done?'

Bob Letham preached from Matthew 13, the parable of the sower, showing from this vivid story that the kingdom of heaven—the rule of God over the world instituted at Christ's coming and ultimately fulfilled at his second return—advances in this age in the midst of disappoint-



ment, through apparent defeat and implacable hostility, to a harvest out of proportion to what would be expected. We are therefore part of a worldwide project—a people whom Jesus Christ died to purchase. Whatever the heartbreaks, our work is part of the great movement of God's grace

that will produce that multitude that no man can number.

May our great God make his servant equal to such a calling, and bless the people of Sheffield with the knowledge of the glorious gospel of Christ!



## A book on prayer

Mrs Tegwen Holst

*Developing a Healthy Prayer Life* by James and Joel Beeke, (Reformation Heritage Books).

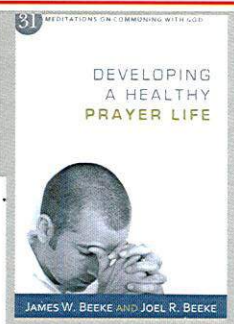
In his foreword to the book, which contains 31 meditations on the subject of communion with God, Geoffrey Thomas writes, 'I wish this book had fallen into my hands fifty years ago when I was a young Christian.' Having read the book several times, I feel exactly the same.

It is *an ideal book for young people*. It runs to only 99 pages and no chapter is longer than three and a half pages, making it very suitable for daily devotional reading. The authors write with great simplicity, clarity and perception, on topics such as, Who should pray? Pray in Christ's name; Pray believingly; Pray submissively; Pray by the Spirit; Pray with Scripture. In the introduction, 'What is prayer?' they write, 'We have no claim on God but must rely entirely on the merit and the prayers of Christ

and the indispensable aid of the Holy Spirit.'

This is reflected, heart-warmingly, on every page of the book. The chapter 'Pray Humbly' contains a very timely caution for those of us who often 'sigh, "If only my prayer were true prayer,"....because this thought can contain the notion that the *quality* of your prayer gives it merit....If you believed that your prayers were "good" prayers then they would be prayers of self merit....If you are waiting to approach God until you are offering "good" or "true" prayers, you are waiting in vain. Humility evaporates when it recognizes itself.'

All of us, as disciples in the school of Christ, can look forward with great anticipation to this new series of books.



# Spotlight on the Churches

## News from around the Presbytery

### Sheffield

Following the ordination and induction service in July, the congregation has been very encouraged, with our first baptism in August and regular enjoyment of the Lord's Supper (once a month). Brian Norton continues to travel to Sheffield to encourage the work and he is completing the communicants and baptism class which he began earlier in the year. We continue to welcome a stream of visitors, some from abroad—most recently from Jordan, the USA and Northern Ireland.

We have discovered a chapel near our Sunday meeting place which was built in 1629 and whose founding minister became a member of the Westminster Assembly. We intend to use this chapel for some of our midweek meetings in the coming months.

*Our prayer requests:* for new people

to be added to us, in particular those who desire solid doctrine and are teachable; for the church to be financially self-supporting; for elders to be raised up; and that adverts in *Evangelical Times* and *Evangelicals Now* over the coming months will make the church known.

♦ Kevin Bidwell

### Gateshead

We asked the Lord for visible fruit from our recent Christianity Explored course, and he has answered. Three people have professed faith and have been approved for church membership, two of whom will be baptized (d.v.). One will also present her infant son for baptism on the same occasion.

Deacons chosen in the spring of this year have now been ordained.

We have just concluded our third Young People's Adventure Camp, with





27 participants, coming from Gateshead, Durham, Sheffield, Solihull, and nearby Newcastle Reformed Evangelical Church. Although we think it important to keep the camp small, we plan to offer a limited number of places to the Presbytery at large for 2012. Those interested can contact Kevin Hilton: [kevin\\_hilton@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:kevin_hilton@hotmail.co.uk).

◆ Bill Schweitzer

### *Chelmsford*

David and Barbara Cross joined us on 4 September, their last Sunday in England before leaving for the States. It was a time of sad farewells, but also of gratitude to God for all that they have meant to the Chelmsford congregation and far beyond; an opportunity to commit them to the Lord for their next phase of service.

Most members are back from holidays and we look forward to resuming regular activities with renewed vigour, seeking fresh opportunities to share the gospel with others, both individually and as a congregation.

Recent reports concerning Rafe Louis' eyesight have proved really encouraging, and we thank everyone for their prayers for Rafe. Thank you too, for your prayers regarding our ministerial search. It will soon be two years that we have not had a minister, but we are trusting in God's timing and provision.

◆ Julie Kavanagh

### *Bury St Edmunds*

At the end of May we enjoyed the visit of 33 students and staff from Alabama. During their stay, they did some DIY at a local community centre and helped us make contacts with local young people. As a follow-on from that work, we held a Fun Day at the same community centre for primary school children on 20 August. We were very pleased and thankful to the Lord that 22 children came for games, singing, crafts and Bible story all based on the six days of creation. We plan to hold another similar day, as the Lord leads.

Our minister, Matthew, is unwell with pericarditis following a virus in mid July. Please pray for his complete recovery.

◆ Clare Pape

### *Immanuel, Cardiff*

The Lord has continued to show his goodness to us in many ways. In our church holiday in Bala at the start of June, we had daily studies on 'Christ in the Psalms', looking at Psalms 2, 8, 45, 69, 110 and 118. Joshua Jacobs from Philadelphia is with us for a second placement. He led two barbecues and encouraged everyone to bring friends or neighbours. This resulted in some attending services. We are praying that those who have started to attend the church this year will be brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

We have also rejoiced in the birth of another covenant child, Angelica Elisa,

to Vito and Giovanna.

We are very burdened at this time for Jeremy Humphries, and for his parents, Roy and Mave. Jeremy has been under psychiatric care for some time. When allowed home leave, he was attending Immanuel. However, he has been obsessed with the thought that the warnings of Hebrews 6 and 10 apply to him. Recently he stepped in front of a train and, as a result of his injuries, is paralyzed, but some ability to move is gradually returning. His prospects are not clear at the moment.

This autumn, we hope to deliver two newsletters to our neighbourhood. A Christianity Explored course is about to begin.

Ben and Hannah Fiddian, with baby daughter Gwyneth, plan to spend the next year with Immanuel, as Ben pursues his studies. We hope that experience gained with us will further equip Ben for his future service.

◆ Peter Naylor

### *Cambridge*

In the next month, thousands of students will arrive in Cambridge and it is our desire to see more of them coming to CPC. Pray that David Pfeiffer and the student leadership team will be given wisdom to know the best ways to contact students and make our church known in the student community. One of our members, Naomi Hilton, is helping to co-ordinate the International Student Welcome, which will

take place between 24 September and 8 October. They welcome international students at the bus and train stations, organize social events, and arrange visits to students who request one.

Hannah Goodman continues to organize the evangelistic book table in the city centre each Saturday morning. They recently had a long conversation with a young Muslim man, Sharif, and have asked us to pray for his conversion.

Peter Prescott's employment as our church evangelist has come to an end, and he and Taryn are starting six months' discipleship training with YWAM at Harpenden, in order to equip them for their goal of ministering in India.

The youth group have had a good year, with about 15 regularly attending, including a few newcomers from outside the church. Pray that they will return this term. The youth group had an enjoyable and encouraging weekend away at Oulton Broad, Norfolk, in June. Several have taken exams this summer. Pray for them as they make decisions about their future, and seek to serve Christ in school, college and at home.

Daniel Glassey is going to Thailand in October for six months to work with Wycliffe Bible Translators, helping to develop computer programs to assist missionaries with Bible translation.

◆ Annabel Haylett



## Immanuel Church, Tranås

The Methodist denomination and two other evangelical denominations in Sweden have decided to merge. The local Methodist church with which we work has decided to join the new denomination for now, but might decide to leave it in 2012 and dissolve the congregation. In that case, their members will seek membership in other churches, and we believe some members might want to join Immanuelskyrkan. For some this is a very difficult and confusing time.

We plan to re-start Sunday school again in September, after having had a year without it. The children will be divided into two age groups. There will also be a Bible study every other Sunday evening. For starters we will continue through Genesis. Since there are some different opinions among the two congregations we will look at relevant passages in 1 Corinthians which deal with the gifts of the Spirit, male/female roles, and the ordering of the worship service.

We rejoice that two ladies are now seeking membership in our church.

The group in Stockholm will continue with Bible studies every week. They are looking for good ways to take steps towards becoming a church plant and evangelizing. One couple recently had a baby.

♦Sune Jäderberg



Marcus and Alison

## Durham

We have had two weddings this summer and these have brought two new people into the congregation. Pictured above, Marcus and Alison, may be the first couple that has come from two EPCEW churches.

We have been delighted to welcome a family of six from Northern Ireland. We hope for some new students in October, to add to those who have been away for the summer. Sarah Leverton returns after a year in Belgium. So 'upstairs' (our balcony) will probably be in regular use. With Marcus Hobson starting as a ministerial assistant, it is a new year in several ways.

Paul and Kilby Austin came for two

short visits in June and August. The college in Kampala is awaiting official recognition as a degree-awarding body; the principal, Palmer Robertson, is away on a sabbatical year. Our prayers must also be for the economic situation; rising prices affect the running of the college and the ability of students to raise sufficient funds.

Michael and Jane Kane, Jenny Denning's parents, spent a month in Mexico, visiting their son David and his family, working with Wycliffe Bible Translators there. They helped them move house to settle among a particular language group, and have been welcomed by a church with a minister who has embraced Reformed teaching. We look forward to hearing about it more formally at a midweek meeting.

♦Brenda Norton

## Blackburn

For three weeks in July/August, our minister Norman Green and one of our deacons, Paul Nutter, were involved in evangelistic work in Kenya. Norman's preaching was well received, with hundreds hearing the gospel in the open air at a place called Maua.

He was also invited to preach at a pastors' conference in Nairobi, preaching every morning for six days.

His schedule was exhausting with a lot of travelling. Norman had to preach up to three times a day in some places; as well as this they were involved in a lot of visiting, seeking to alleviate their

hardships. They visited an orphanage which our congregation supports. We ask God to bless what seems to be an annual visit to that desperately needy part of the world. We pray this would be 'a door open, which no man can shut' to the glory of God.

On a different note, we have had two marriages in our church recently and pray also God's richest blessing on those couples in these difficult days where the devil uses all means at his disposal to break up the home.

♦Dean Stevenson

## Hull

Every year as the time for the Holiday Bible Club approaches, the fear that no children will come hovers over us, and every year it has been proven wrong. This year is no exception and I am pleased to report that 13 children (and one parent) came along. It's not a huge number but it seems to be the norm for us.

They were great children who really got involved in all the activities, and for the first time in many years they all attended every day (apart from two brothers who had an unavoidable appointment on the Friday and were 'upset' about missing the last day).

As usual we distributed 1000 leaflets in the streets round the church. In the previous 11 years, this leaflet distribution has not resulted in any children coming, and it was with some scepticism that we did it this year. But the





**Hull holiday Bible club**

same afternoon I had a phone call from a parent to book her daughter a place at the club.

Of the 13 children we had this year, six were new. None of the new ones were local but were brought from areas of Hull that required a bus journey. Amazing! They came from areas that we had not leafleted. How did they find out about the club? Grannies got the leaflet and told their daughters and hey presto. It is not the scenario we had in mind but praise the Lord for it.

The theme of the club was based on five heroes from Scripture, young people who lived their lives faithfully for God: Samuel who faithfully told Eli that God was going to judge his family, the young lad who gave his packed lunch to feed 5000, the young slave girl who told Naaman about Elisha, Josiah the young King who walked in the way of the Lord, and the young David who slew Goliath. In each of these stories we emphasized their faith and showed that they all made a difference in the lives of others. Each day there was a memory

verse related to the story which was put to music and the children learnt them by singing them. The one they loved best was Proverbs 3: 5.

There were games designed to emphasize the theme of trusting. The craft was the armour of God, each piece having one of the memory verses on it somewhere.

This year's club was probably one of the best we have had in years. I mentioned early that one parent, Claire, had stayed in the club each day. She listened to the stories and helped her four year old daughter with the craft. At first she was very quiet but as the days went by she began to talk and smile. There was a sadness about her. We invited her to the church outing to Filey on the Saturday after the holiday Bible Club and she came along. I am told that she said to one of the ladies from the church that it was the best day of her life. We are praying for her.

♦Bill McCully

## **Cheltenham**

Our three day Holiday Bible Club was attended by 11 children and we made some good contacts with the community. At the end of August, was the wedding of John and Catharine and the whole congregation were invited to join in their special day. We have enjoyed welcoming several visitors to our services, including an American family who are with us for a year.

We value your prayers, particularly for the weekly means of grace, that Christ would be proclaimed, sinners saved, and saints sanctified. Please pray for our weekly club for children and that the contacts made in the Bible Club would be developed through this.

♦Andrew Young

## **Solihull**

We are thankful to God for his faithfulness to us thus far, as we approach our sixth birthday. We continue to see fruitfulness in the lives of our people and their children.

The collaboration with Open Air Missions and another local FIEC pastor is proving interesting and fruitful. We meet twice a month in Solihull High Street, one of them during the monthly Farmers' Market. The conversations are interesting, especially with students from the local FE and sixth form colleges. A possibility is opening up for us to have a Birmingham City Mission worker attached to us for a time. This may be an answer to earlier prayers.

However, we need wisdom to work out the details.

It has been good to welcome three adults into membership since the Spring issue.

♦Stephen Dancer

## **Bethel, Cardiff**

Prayer points: Todd's ministry and studies at WEST; his wife Kathyryn is due to have their fifth child in September. Three from the Christianity Explored group wish to go on from that starting point. Two men, Ben Holst and James Hepburn, are in training to serve as future elders, God willing.

♦Editor

## **London: Stamford Hill Group**

Saturday, 4 June, saw the last meeting at which Flávio and Fabiana Gomide would be present, as they were returning to Brazil (Uberlândia in Minas Gerais). Rev. Dr Carlos Del Pino, European director of Agência Presbiteriana de Missões Transculturais (APMT), was present to preach and to say farewell to them. Timothy Mulla now leads the group, helped by his wife Marilene. They live on the London Theological Seminary campus, where Timothy is studying. The group became a mission of the EPCEW Presbytery two years ago but has now been handed back to the care of APMT, though the Presbytery will still maintain contacts. They continue to meet on Saturday evenings in St Bartholomew's Church, Craven Park Road, London N15 6AA.

♦Chris Kavanagh



# Abortion

Dr Chris Richards

**T**he greatest single offence that is being regularly perpetrated in Britain today and the first thing that an Old Testament prophet would reproach us for<sup>1</sup>—*abortion*.

What is this atrocity? How many babies are being killed by abortion? What does the Bible say? What does British law say? What consequences are being suffered?

## *The current situation*

At the moment, UK law—though not in Northern Ireland, where abortion remains illegal—recognizes several ‘grounds’ for abortion. One ground is when the mother’s life is threatened; but this is rarely the case.

About 98% of abortions are justified by the assessment ‘that the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk, greater than if the pregnancy were terminated, of injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman or any existing children of the family of the pregnant woman’ (Grounds C and D conflated).<sup>2</sup> This can be applied only to pregnancies of under 24 weeks’ gestation.

The law also allows for abortion *at any gestation* when there is ‘substantial risk’ of the child suffering ‘physical or mental abnormalities



at 12 weeks

as to be seriously handicapped’. In 2010 in England and Wales 482 babies were aborted on account of Down’s syndrome.<sup>2</sup>

## *‘You shall not murder!’*

This law is a full assault on the Sixth Commandment.

1. In permitting abortion, our society has rejected its duty to restrain sin through law. What should be prohibited now becomes an agonizing temptation for every woman who finds herself preg-

nant under less than favourable circumstances.

2. By leaving the interpretation and implementation of the law to the medical profession, it has given abortion a respectability it should never have.
3. It gives no ethical consideration to the life of the unborn child (except in a negative way, when the baby is expected to be disabled) and takes into consideration only the circumstances of the mother and family.
4. It leaves doctors with the uncertainty of risk assessment. Those who originally argued for the Abortion Act said that it would only allow abortion when the mother’s life was clearly at risk. But risk assessment is so vague that in effect we have abortion on demand. Giving birth to an unwanted baby is seen as a greater threat to the mother’s mental or physical health (or her children’s) than having an abortion.
5. In fact, abortion carries with it substantial physical and mental complications. Nursing mothers have much better health. It could be argued that risk assessment should always favour continuing the pregnancy.<sup>3</sup>

## *How many abortions?*

Since the Abortion Act 1967 was passed, over seven million abortions have been performed.

Currently in the UK around 210,000

are carried out every year: approximately one abortion for every four live births. 77% of these abortions were carried out at less than 10 weeks gestation.

That is not all. There are three other causes of abortion not included in the official figures.

**1. IVF.** Since 1991 IVF (In Vitro Fertilisation) has ‘created’ over 3,000,000 (three million!) embryos. For every IVF baby born, on average 20 embryos have been created.<sup>4</sup> Nearly 1,500,000 have been destroyed and over 760,000 are currently being stored.<sup>5</sup> Many of these embryo orphans have little or no prospect of ‘womb adoption’.

**2. MAP.** We do not know how many early abortions are caused by the so-called ‘morning-after pill’. Otherwise known as post-coital or emergency ‘contraception’, this high-dose progesterone tablet has been developed to be taken after intercourse. It can work in a number of ways—usually by preventing fertilization, but sometimes by preventing implantation of the already fertilized embryo, *thereby causing an early abortion*.

**3. Some contraceptives** effectively cause early abortion.

Although a biochemical means of preventing the sperm from reaching the egg has been sought, none can guarantee that an already fertilized embryo will not be destroyed.

The progesterone-only or ‘mini’ Pill and the intra-uterine device both



commonly act by preventing implantation and therefore cause an early abortion.

We also know that the more commonly used Combined Oral Contraceptive Pill may prevent implantation of a newly-formed embryo. Even women who take it reliably may become pregnant, confirming that breakthrough ovulation does occasionally occur. Therefore, though seemingly rare, the possibility of induced abortions through its use cannot be ruled out.<sup>6</sup>

### *How is an abortion performed?*

For many years, most early abortions were performed surgically—using powerful suction or by scraping out what was in the womb. Nowadays, when the pregnancy is still in the early stages (it can also be used later on), a medical method is preferred, usually by means of an oral hormone tablet followed by a vaginal prostaglandin tablet. This may avoid hospital admission since most of the process takes place at home over a couple of days. In effect the medications induce an early labour, which may culminate in the explicit passage of the fetus, to the shock of the woman.

### *What does God's Word say?*

There is no direct mention of abortion in the Bible; but much may be deduced. It is important that Christians think biblically about this subject for at least two reasons.

First, we are commanded to search God's Word thoroughly and obey it diligently (Ps. 119: 4). We must expect to wrestle until we see clearly how to apply God's law to the pressing ethical issues of our day.

Second, confidence in God's Word will strengthen us so that we do not capitulate under pressure to sin, even in the hardest circumstances. In this way we can avoid incurring guilt.

### *The sanctity of life*

The Bible teaches that man is unique—distinct from all other life—created in the image of God (Gen. 1: 26).

God forbids the deliberate taking of human life. God said to Noah, 'Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man' (Gen. 9: 6).

The protection and honouring of life is further demanded by the Sixth Commandment, 'You shall not murder' (Exod. 20: 13).

The case law of the Pentateuch penalizes even the accidental taking of life (Num. 35: 15, 32) and permits deliberate killing only in self-defence (Exod. 22: 2), in war (Lev. 26: 7), or in judicial punishment for serious crimes (Lev. 20: 15).

The Bible teaches us to respect the sanctity of human life not only by not taking life but also in the positive protecting and compassionate upholding of life, most clearly expressed by Christ in the parable of

the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37). We are called to care sacrificially for others, especially those who are weak and helpless. This goes against man's fallen instinct to abuse his power for selfish ends. Providing such care is the positive intent of the Sixth Commandment.

God requires *all* people to obey his moral law, which is 'summarily comprehended in the ten commandments' (*Shorter Catechism*, 14). It is by the standard of the moral law that sin is exposed and defined. Therefore, God's demand to respect life applies to the believer and non-believer alike. A righteous and wise nation will use God's moral law to inform its state laws (2 Sam. 23: 3).

### *When does life start?*

Does life actually start at conception? If it does, then abortion, including early abortion, is murder.

The Bible recognizes life from conception.<sup>7</sup> We have further support for this, which earlier generations lacked, from scientific knowledge of the process of the formation of human life in the womb.

**1. The Bible recognizes life at conception.** Scripture repeatedly declares the creative activity of God at the very moment of conception and recognises that life in the womb is a precious gift from God.

Psalms 139: 13-16 describes actual, not simply potential, life from conception. These verses beautifully and movingly express God's involvement

in the growth and development of the unborn child, the personal continuity of a unique life—before as well as after birth—and the Psalmist's special relationship with God even before birth.

In Psalm 51: 5, we read, 'Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me'. David recognizes his own life and sinful nature from conception. Of course, he had to be a person and alive to possess a sinful nature!

In Luke 1: 41-44, we read of the astonishing, joyful recognition of the unborn baby Jesus (perhaps only a two-week-old embryo), by John, still in his mother's womb (six months), thus denoting the 'womb life' of both boys. Matthew 1: 20 predates this in describing the conception of Jesus by Mary 'of the Holy Spirit', thus identifying the commencement of Jesus' life with his conception.

Are we in danger of forming a circular argument if we assume that biblical conception equals the start of pregnancy, and that equals life?

Today the event of a mother conceiving is taken to coincide precisely with the biological event of fertilization when the sperm unites with the ovum to form one new cell (i.e. the mother conceives when the egg is fertilized). The biblical writers may not have known these biological details. However, they did make a clear connection in time between sexual intercourse and conception, which is particularly clear in 2 Samuel 11: 4, 5,



and in David's desire to cover up the deed by *urgently* recalling Uriah so that the baby's origin might be concealed (verses 6-13). From this temporal association we may infer that the writers were using the word 'conception' to describe the start of the pregnancy that resulted.

In the biblical description of early life in the womb there is no hint of an early body dissociated from the spirit or soul (or of a later *ensoulment*, as postulated by Aristotle and others). Throughout the Bible, an individual is recognized as a single body-soul unit, until his or her death indivisible and interdependent. The *end* of our earthly existence, death, is defined by the separation of the body and spirit/soul. There is no suggestion of identity without life from conception. The embryo you were, is the human being you are!

**2. We have scientific knowledge of the process and nature of the formation of human life.** All that man has learned over the last few decades regarding early life confirms what the Bible reveals. God, in his kindness, has in recent years enabled us to discover more about how he skillfully creates each one of us (Ps. 139: 15). Those of us who have had looked through this window on our substance yet unformed (Ps. 139: 16) are privileged indeed, and can confirm that the process is 'fearful and wonderful' (Ps. 139: 14).

Such knowledge establishes the identity of the baby from conception

in at least three ways.

First, the genetic sequence formed at fertilization is *unique* (except in the case of identical twins, though even they eventually develop a somewhat different sequence).<sup>8</sup> Although our nature is not defined solely by our genes, our conception determines innumerable aspects of what we are and how different we are from all other persons on earth.

Second, the process of development is *continuous*. Beyond the moment of fertilization, there is no point at which one could obviously say there could be any distinction of life from non-life. Attempts have been made to argue the legitimacy of abortion by defining the start of life by the acquisition of certain qualities such as pain awareness.<sup>9</sup> This approach is arbitrary (who chooses and how?), based on uncertain science, variable for the individual baby, and leads to an unbiblical 'you are worth what you can do' view of life. There are dramatic events in the development of the unborn child, such as the start of the heartbeat at four weeks after fertilization, the first spontaneous move-



ments at six weeks, and, of course, birth. But all serve to further the continuous process of the baby's development.

Third, development is *progressive*, each stage laying the platform for the next and all straining towards maturity beyond puberty.

Scientific observation, then, confirms the declaration of Psalm 139 that development in the womb is both individual and purposeful.

### **Ethical conclusion**

In the light of God's Word, supported by scientific observation, we need to recognize abortion for what it is, *the intentional and wrongful killing of an unborn child between conception and birth*.

Legalizing this has allowed the unborn child's God-given advocates, his parents, and particularly his mother, to reject him, and so allow the murder of the smallest, most vulnerable and most dependent members of our society.

### **How do they try to justify the Abortion Act?**

The widespread practice of sex outside marriage in the 1950s and 60s led to an increasing number of women with an unwanted pregnancy. Abortion could supply what contraceptives could not—the guarantee of 'pregnancy-free' sexual intercourse. Contraception was never going to be fully effective due to



practical failures and the indiscipline that goes along with sexual licence.

Some used to seek an abortion illegally (and not always safely) though many others kept their pregnancies. Arising from the personal consequences of breaking the Seventh Commandment ('You shall not commit adultery') came a demand for the state to allow the breaking of the Sixth Commandment ('You shall not murder') by making abortion legal.

Proponents of abortion did not tend to make such observations. Rather they used arguments still common today:

1. The need to offer a compassionate way out (other than adoption) of the hopelessness of a woman with an unwanted child, especially in hard cases of rape<sup>10</sup> or fetal abnormality.

2. The moral obligation of the state to provide a healthy alternative to illegal abortions, which were sometimes complicated by infection—a 'harm reduction' approach.

3. The right of the mother to autonomy over her body, including over her unborn child—whose life was denied or whose rights could in no way be balanced against the right of the woman. In practice for many



women this was a right to a convenient life, freedom from embarrassment, or to be able to continue her education.

### *How should we respond?*

With confidence in God's commandments, we must assert that no consideration of personal circumstances (except perhaps *the extraordinarily rare situation* of the imminent death of the mother herself<sup>11</sup>), nor the knowledge of possible disability in the child, should be allowed to threaten that precious life in the womb.

Pregnancy after rape or incest is a tragedy and demands the most tender response. But we must remember that the most wise God of love has defined compassion as obedience to his commandments (1 John 5: 2, 3). We must resist a pragmatic response contrary to God's laws.

How did the church respond in the 1960s? Battered by liberal theology, which had already weakened the church's voice against the change in sexual ethics, the church's opposition to the introduction of legal abortion was generally muted or confused.

This was true of some prominent churchmen who held to Reformed doctrine. Whilst ministers of religion prevaricated, secular politicians strengthened their hand in this moral vacuum. Perhaps most damaging of all was the fact that some professing Christian doctors (enjoying public respect for their medical profession)

displayed a lack of confidence in God's law as they broadcast their moral agonizing (in contrast with Ps. 119: 113).<sup>12</sup>

### *If we give in?*

Let us make three observations about the result of yielding to the arguments for legalized abortion.

First, the pleading of special cases, such as rape, at the time when the Abortion Act was passed, opened a door, which has since let in a flood of abortions permitted on lesser grounds. This is a clear illustration of the legal maxim that 'hard cases make bad law'.

Second, the personal and societal consequences of abortion have been terrible. Actions in defiance of God's commandments never reduce harm, but rather cause harm. In contrast, we are reminded of the kindness of God in the protection from harm that obedience to his commandments affords, even in the most testing of circumstances.

Third, removing the deterrent of an unwelcome consequence of sexual sin, abortion has promoted promiscuity, with increased demand for both contraception and abortion. As with other so-called 'harm reduction' approaches, sin begets more sin.

### *Consequences of the legalization of abortion*

**Carnage.** The quiet carnage of our youngest and weakest! Guilt keeps it

well hidden! The walls of otherwise respectable NHS hospitals guard the terrible secret. The continuing desire for sexual licence keeps it going.

Though silent in their death, those aborted babies continue to speak: *their blood cries out from the ground* (Gen. 4: 10).

**God's judgment on our society.** We cannot underestimate the seriousness of our society's decision to permit in law a wicked act that is in clear violation of God's laws. The rulers of the earth are warned to take heed of the Lord and his laws, lest they and their nations face the full blast of God's anger and 'perish in the way' (Ps. 2: 10-12).

Surely we are already seeing some evidence of God's judgment today. Violence in the womb spills over into violence on our streets, as the implications of moral lawlessness are more openly expressed. The philosophy underlying abortion is used to argue for infanticide and euthanasia (the deliberate ending of the life of a disabled infant is already permitted in at least one European country).<sup>13</sup>

And what about the demographic implications? We have an ageing population! There is an imbalance: elderly people outnumber young people. Who will pay their pensions? Who will provide care for them in old age? Already the pension burden is so great that the retirement age must be increased. As life expectancy goes up, the problem is intensified. Dare our society complain, when it

has acquiesced in the killing of so many young ones?

**God's judgment on the church.** In the run up to the legalization of abortion, the church was complicit in her silence and indifference.

Since then, despite pro-life declarations from some denominations, our response has remained muted, perhaps for fear of causing offence or appearing to lack compassion.

Genuine repentance is marked by 'grief and hatred of sin'. How many of us have shed a tear or torn our metaphorical clothes over such an abomination? Let us be warned by Jesus' prescription for salt that has lost its flavour: 'good for nothing but to be thrown out and be trampled underfoot by men' (Matt. 5: 13).

**God's judgment on individuals.** It is well documented that women who choose to have an abortion experience spiritual, emotional and physical consequences.<sup>14</sup> They are often plagued with guilt and regret, sometimes accompanied by low mood and anger.<sup>15</sup> The father of the unborn child may suffer similarly.

Only those who repent find genuine relief from this burden of guilt. Some attempt to deny or suppress their guilt through drugs and alcohol, but the memory and guilt can eat away and eventually destroy the person. Suicide rates are substantially increased.<sup>16</sup> The woman faces an increased risk of having a premature baby, should she decide to keep a subsequent pregnancy, and may find



it difficult to bond with the next child.

**God's judgment on the professions.** The state has co-opted the legal and medical professions to enact the provision of abortion services, thereby contradicting and threatening their legitimate role of upholding righteousness and providing healing.

Individual lawyers and health professionals become complicit in the process of abortion itself.

**Despite the conscientious objection clause,** many Christian doctors who oppose abortion find it impossible not to be drawn in somehow—even in the state's demand to refer women seeking abortion to a colleague (who will refer them for abortion instead).

Their professional codes expect them to swallow the double-mindedness of clinical care in a 'non-judgmental' manner, as the service treats one unborn child as 'him' or 'her' but another as merely an inanimate 'product of conception'. They are asked to clothe themselves with emotional indifference, while the God of glory thunders his judgment.

It is staggering to read the web site of one abortion clinic that never mentions *the baby*, but only refers to the pregnancy as a condition to be corrected, and—how cruel!—frequently uses the word 'gentle'. Gentle murder is a strangely evil concept.

### **The Christian response**

**Repent and pray.** We need to repent of any commission of, or indif-

ference to, this sin. We must then 'bear fruits worthy of repentance' (Luke 3: 8). Only then will our repentance be proved genuine. With boldness and perseverance we may declare that 'It is time for you to act, O Lord, for they have regarded your law as void' (Ps. 119: 126). May the Lord grant a full repeal of the Abortion Act.

**Speak out.** All of us, but especially our ministers, need to intercede on behalf of the unborn child, proclaiming and arguing the wrongfulness of abortion.

Whilst supporting organizations such as Christian Medical Fellowship and the Christian Institute in their determined opposition to abortion, how good it would be to see the churches united in one voice of evangelical opposition, since that is not happening at the moment.

**Act.** We must seek to obey the Sixth Commandment with absolute diligence by not causing abortion through the use of certain contraceptives, the 'morning-after pill' or IVF.

We must seek to 'deliver those who are drawn towards death, and hold back those stumbling towards the slaughter' (Prov. 24: 11) by supporting the work of pregnancy centres which help women in so-called crisis pregnancies. Many women find themselves under pressure from family and circumstances, as well as ignorance of the nature of the life inside them and the implications of choosing an abortion.

### **Help available**

#### **1. [www.tyneside-pregnancy.org.uk](http://www.tyneside-pregnancy.org.uk)**

The author is director of a centre in Newcastle upon Tyne, whose Christian advisers provide information about the nature of early life, the nature of abortion and its consequences, and available support services. They commend the moral imperative to choose life rather than abortion, often conveyed implicitly, for example, through an ultrasound scan which is offered to all women. The sight of her baby's heart beating—the size of a poppy seed, it starts beating just three weeks and six days after conception—can be pivotal in a mother's choosing to spare the life of her baby.

There is support also for women who need friendship, practical, or spiritual care. Others who have had an abortion need to know of the grace of God through Christ as the only and necessary route out of despair and guilt.

#### **2. [www.loveseek.org.uk](http://www.loveseek.org.uk)**

We need to teach the next generation of children about the importance of marriage and of sexual purity, remembering the contribution of sexual immorality to the current demand for abortion. See the loveseek web site for school and youth group material.

### **Further reading**

Readers may wish to look at the following.

Peter Barnes, *Abortion—Open Your*



*Mouth for the Dumb* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2010). 64pp. ISBN 9781848710542 cost £2.

Wayne Grudem, *Politics according to the Bible* (Zondervan, 2010), pp.157-178.

Dr Chris Richards, a deacon of Gateshead Presbyterian Church, is a Consultant Paediatrician, and Director of Tyneside Pregnancy Advice Centre.

### **Notes**

1. Dr Raymond Johnston, former Director of National Festival of Light.
2. Abortion Statistics, England and Wales: 2010, Department of Health, May 2011, [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk).
3. 'Are the majority of UK abortions Illegal?', Chris Richards, *Helix*, Spring 2006, pp. 10-11 [www.cmf.org.uk](http://www.cmf.org.uk).
4. [www.hfea.gov.uk](http://www.hfea.gov.uk) for cumulative data.
5. Hansard Written Answers to Lord Alton, 21 July 2011, Column WA306.
6. Randy Alcorn, Does the Birth Control Pill cause abortions? (EPM, 2007).
7. Others have argued convincingly a second line of theological evidence based on the necessity of Christ having both natures at his conception. Ralph Cunningham, 'Life's Beginning and the Incarnation', *Evangelicals Now*, March



2010, [www.e-n.org.uk](http://www.e-n.org.uk).

8. Anne Casselman, 'Identical Twins' Genes Are Not Identical', *Scientific American*, 3 April 2008, [www.scientificamerican.com](http://www.scientificamerican.com).

9. Donald MacKay's view summarized in *Issues Facing Christians Today*, ed., J. Stott, (Marshall Pickering 1990) pp. 319-321.

10. Some supported the 1967 Act as a means of clarifying the law on what constitutes unlawfulness in abortion. They usually cited the 1938 Bourne case, the tragic rape of a minor.

11. In such circumstances a life-saving intervention in the mother may lead indirectly to the death of the fetus. The doctor is surely justified in focusing on the life of the mother, where otherwise the outcome would be the death of both mother and fetus.

12. R. F. R. Gardener, *Abortion, a Personal Dilemma* (Paternoster, 1972).

13. A. A. E. Verhagen et al., 'Physician medical

decision-making at the end of life in newborns: insight into implementation at two Dutch centers', *Pediatrics*, 2007 120; e20-e28, describes 28 cases of neonatal 'euthanasia' for predicted suffering, predicted low quality of life or the deliberate use of paralytic drugs to end a final illness.

14. Thomas Stahan ed., *Detrimental Effects of Abortion*, 3rd ed. (Acorn, 2001): a summary of scientific literature on the subject.

15. Dominic Beer, 'Psychological Effects after Abortion', *Triple Helix*, Autumn 2006 pp. 12-13, [www.cmf.org.uk](http://www.cmf.org.uk).

16. M. Gissler et al., 'Injury deaths, suicides and homicides associated with pregnancy, Finland 1987-2000', *European Journal of Public Health* 2005 15(5):459-63: suicide rates in abortive women three times higher than that of the general population and six times higher than in women carrying their pregnancy to term. ■

## Calvin's First Hymn Book

Rev. Dr Peter Naylor

In my study, I have a copy (a *Réimpression phototypographique*, 1919) of Calvin's very first hymn book, which he prepared in Strasburg in 1539. Its title is *Aulcuns Psaulmes et Cantiques*



*mys en chant*. It contains 19 Psalms, the Song of Simeon (Luke 2), the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) and the Apostles' Creed, all in French with music for congregational singing.

This early step in the reformation of worship was a move away from choirs chanting or singing in Latin to whole congregations singing in their native tongue. This hymn book, developed in later editions, established *Psalm and hymn singing* in French and Dutch Reformed worship. ■

For further reading see: Nick Needham, 'Westminster and Worship: Psalms, Hymns? And Musical Instruments?' *The Westminster Confession into the 21st Century*, vol.2, 253-9.

## EPCEW DIRECTORY OF CHURCHES

[www.epcew.org.uk](http://www.epcew.org.uk)

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**Bury St Edmunds.** The Meeting House, Churchgate Street, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1RH. Services: Sun. 11:00 am & 6:30 pm; Wed. 7:30 pm. Minister: Rev. Matthew Jolley T.01284 706123. Email: [matthewjolley@mac.com](mailto:matthewjolley@mac.com). Website [www.bse-pc.org](http://www.bse-pc.org).

**Cambridge.** Three locations: All Saints Church, Jesus Lane (am); Resurrection Lutheran Church, Westfield Road (pm); Cockcroft Hall, Clarkson Road, off Grange Road (Thu. pm). Services: Sun. 10:30 am & 6:00 pm; Thu. 7:45 pm. Minister: Rev. Ian Hamilton. T.01223 246371. Email: [revianhamilton@googlemail.com](mailto:revianhamilton@googlemail.com).

**Cardiff, Bethel.** 103 Michaelston Road, Culverhouse Cross, Cardiff CF5 4SX. Services: Sun. 11:00 am & 6:00 pm; Wed. 7:30 pm. Minister: Rev. Todd Matocha. T.029 2059 5000. Email: [revtmatocha@btconnect.com](mailto:revtmatocha@btconnect.com). Website: [www.bethelpcr.org.uk](http://www.bethelpcr.org.uk).

**Cardiff, Immanuel.** Heol Trelai, Caerau, Cardiff CF5 5LJ. Services: Sun. 10:30 am & 6:00 pm; Wed. 7:15 pm. Minister: Rev. Dr Peter Naylor. T.029 2040 5750 or 07773 093738. Messages 029 20007554. Email: [peter.naylor@immanuelcaerau.org.uk](mailto:peter.naylor@immanuelcaerau.org.uk). Website: [www.immanuelcaerau.org.uk](http://www.immanuelcaerau.org.uk).

**Chelmsford.** Hall Street Methodist Church, Chelmsford CM2 0HG. Services Sun. 11:30 am & 6:00 pm; Thu. 8:00 pm. Minister: *vacant*. Associate Minister: Rev. Chris Kavanagh. T.01245 475259. Email: [cjkavanagh@btinternet.com](mailto:cjkavanagh@btinternet.com). Website [www.chelmsfordpres.org.uk](http://www.chelmsfordpres.org.uk).

**Cheltenham.** 23 Naunton Lane, Leckhampton, Cheltenham GL53 7BJ. Services: Sun. 10:30 am & 6:30 pm; Wed. 7:45 pm. Minister: Rev. Andrew Young. T. 01242 231278 or 07963 139683. Email: [revandrewyoung@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:revandrewyoung@yahoo.co.uk). Website: [www.cheltenhampres.org.uk](http://www.cheltenhampres.org.uk).

**Durham.** The Chapel, Laburnum Avenue, (off Hawthorn Terrace), Durham. Services: Sun. 10:30 am & 3:30 pm; Thu. 7:45 pm. Minister: Rev. Brian Norton. T.0191 384 0504. Email: [durham@epcew.org.uk](mailto:durham@epcew.org.uk). Website: [www.depc.org.uk](http://www.depc.org.uk).

**Gateshead.** Lobley Hill Community Centre, 47-49 Scafell Gardens, Gateshead NE11 9LS. Services: Sun. 10:30 am & 6:00 pm. Minister: Rev. Dr Bill Schweitzer. T.07939 071404. Email: [bill.schweitzer@btinternet.com](mailto:bill.schweitzer@btinternet.com).

**Hull.** Rear of 336 Holderness Road, Hull. Services: Sun. 10:30 am & 6:00 pm. Minister: Rev. Bill McCully. T.01482 706413. Email: [mccully@ehpc.co.uk](mailto:mccully@ehpc.co.uk).

**Sheffield.** The Source at Meadowhall, 300 Meadowhall Way, Sheffield, S9 1EA. Services: Sun. 11.00am & 4.00pm. Minister Rev. Dr Kevin Bidwell T.0114 2431720. Email: [kevinbidwell@btinternet.com](mailto:kevinbidwell@btinternet.com). Website: [www.sheffieldpres.org.uk](http://www.sheffieldpres.org.uk).

**Solihull.** Three locations: Cranmore Infants School, Northland Avenue, Solihull, B90 4SA (am); The Women's Institute Hall, 745 Warwick Road, Solihull B91 3DG (pm); 160 Ulverley Green Road, Solihull B92 8AB (Thu. pm) Services: Sun. 10:30 am & 5:00pm; Thu. 7:30 pm at 160 Ulverley Green Road, Solihull B92 8AB. Minister: Rev. Dr Stephen Dancer. T.0121 707 1826. Email: [info@solihullpres.org.uk](mailto:info@solihullpres.org.uk). Website: [www.solihullpres.org.uk](http://www.solihullpres.org.uk).

**Sweden: Tranås.** Höggatan 8, 57333 Tranås, Sweden. Service: Sun. 10:00 am. Minister: Rev. David Bergmark. T.+46 70 244 7241. Email: [dbergmark@erkis.se](mailto:dbergmark@erkis.se). Website: [www.erkis.se](http://www.erkis.se).

**Stockholm.** For information see [www.reformert.se](http://www.reformert.se).

**Clerk of Presbytery:** Rev. Chris Kavanagh, 10 Seabrook Road, Chelmsford CM2 7JG. T.01245 475259. Email: [cjkavanagh@btinternet.com](mailto:cjkavanagh@btinternet.com).